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AUTHOR Friedlander, Jack
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ABSTRACT

A primary objective of this study was to identify the extent to which different areas within the social sciences (i.e., anthropology, economics, history, interdisciplinary social sciences, political science, psychology, social/ethnic studies, and sociology) are presented in the two-year college curriculum. Information on course offerings in each of these social science areas were obtained from two nationwide studies of approximately 175 two-year colleges each conducted by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges during 1977 and 1978. Results show that over 90% of the colleges offered at least one course in each of the following five areas: sociology (100%), economics (99%), psychology (99%), political science (93.8%), and history (92.1%). Percentages in other areas were 54% in anthropology, 40% in interdisciplinary social sciences, and 20% in social/ethnic studies. In terms of course availability to different student populations, the study revealed that: (1) other than the general introductory survey courses, the range of transfer-oriented courses was very limited; (2) with very few exceptions, social science courses designed especially for occupational students were not available; (3) a low percentage of colleges offered a general introductory social science course for continuing education students; and (4) still fewer social science courses were designed for developmental education students. (MB)

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THE SOCIAL SCIENCE CURRICULUM IN THE COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGE

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Jack Friedlander

Center for the Study of Community Colleges

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THE SOCIAL SCIENCE CURRICULUM IN THE COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGE

Jack Friedlander

The comprehensive nature of the community college must be taken into account when considering its social science curriculum. Programs are offered for transfer students in various major fields; for non-transfer students seeking a general education; for students pursuing occupational and technical training; for educationally "underprepared" students needing remedial courses required for entry into the college's transfer or occupational programs; and for non-degree oriented students desiring cultural, recreational, and community interest courses.

Given this diversity in programs, it seems important to determine whether the social science curriculum in the two-year college is comprehensive enough to meet the multiple missions of that institution. This question will be addressed by examining the extent to which the course offerings in the social sciences are designed to meet the educational needs and objectives of students in each of the college's constitutency groups--transfer, occupational, developmental, general, and continuing education.

Method

The social science curriculum, as defined in this paper, consists of courses in the following eight subject-matter areas: anthropology, economics, history, interdisciplinary social sciences, political science, psychology, social/ethnic studies, and sociology. Information on course offerings in each of these social science areas was obtained from two nationwide studies of the two-year college curriculum which were conducted in 1977 and 1978 by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges.

Data on history, political science, and social/ethnic studies courses were obtained from a representative national sample of 178 two-year colleges in a study sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. All courses appearing in the Spring 1975 and Spring 1977 class schedules of the sample colleges were counted and were also grouped into subject area categories. For example, history courses were grouped into one of six subject areas: (1) State and Local; (2) U.S. History; (3) Western World Civilization; (4) Other World Regions; (5) Special Groups; (6) Social History.

Data on anthropology, economics, interdisciplinary social sciences, psychology, and sociology courses were obtained from a representative national sample of 175 two-year colleges in a study sponsored by the National Science Foundation. All courses appearing in the sample colleges' class schedules for Spring 1977 through Winter 1978 (summer session excluded) were counted for each discipline and were also grouped into subject area categories within each discipline. Course descriptions were obtained from college catalogs.

RESULTS

Percent of Colleges Offering Social Science Courses

A primary objective of this current study was to identify the extent to which different areas within the social sciences are represented in the two-year college curriculum. The results presented in Table 1 show that in the time periods under study, over 90 percent of the colleges offered at least one course in each of the following five social science areas: sociology (100%), economics (99%), psychology (99%), political science (93.8%), and history (92.1%). The percentage of colleges offering a course in one of the remaining social science areas considered in this study were, in descending order, anthropology (54%), interdisciplinary social sciences (40%), and social/ethnic studies (20%). The

relatively small percentage of colleges that offered an interdisciplinary social science course or one in social/ethnic studies is somewhat surprising in light of the important educational values attributed to these two areas of study by increasing numbers of commentators.

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE OF TWO-YEAR COLLEGES OFFERING COURSES IN A SOCIAL SCIENCE DISCIPLINE

Social Science Area	Percentage
Anthropology	54.0
Economics	99.0
History	92.1
Interdisciplinary Social Science	40.0
Political Science	93.8
Psychology	99.0
Social/Ethnic Studies	20.8
Sociology	100.0

Availability of Courses for Transfer Students

The data presented in Table 2 show that over 80 percent of the colleges offered an introductory course intended primarily for students planning to transfer to a four-year institution in the following social science areas: principles of sociology (94%), principles of economics (93%), general psychology (87%), United States history (88%), western/world civilization (83%), and Americ

government (82%). Less than 25 percent of the colleges offered a transfer-oriented introductory course in anthropology, interdisciplinary social sciences, and social/ethnic studies. This latter finding is a direct result of the small percentage of colleges that offer courses in any one category within these areas.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE OF TWO-YEAR COLLEGES OFFERING COURSES IN CONTENT AREAS WITHIN A SOCIAL SCIENCE AREA BY INSTITUTIONAL SIZE[a]

Social Science Area	Percent of colleges listing course in class schedules			
	Total	Small (1-1499)	Middle (1500-7499)	Large (7500+)
Anthropology	54	35	62	88
Cultural	37	17	47	80
Intro/General	25	21	28	32
Physical	22	7	27	68
Specialized Culture	16	10	22	48
Archaeology/Prehistory	15	1	28	52
Indian/Native American	10	4	13	68
Economics	99	99	100	100
Principles	93	90	90	96
Business-Related	34	15	41	80
Intro/General	33	32	33	44
Technology-Related	21	13	28	20
American/History	16	--	17	36
Special Topics	9	--	13	20

Social Science Area	Percent of colleges listing course in class schedules			
	Total	Small (1-1499)	Middle (1500-7499)	Large (7500+)
History	92	88	92	100
United States	88	81	90	100
Western/World	83	74	83	100
Special Groups	30	7	34	67
Social	28	17	30	42
State and Local	26	9	28	61
Other World Regions	23	7	25	49
Interdisciplinary Social Sciences	40	14	50	84
Survey of Social Science	17	10	23	68
Aging	16	6	32	88
Thanatology	9	--	6	4
Environmental	7	--	10	32
Special Groups	6	--	13	16
Urban Planning	5	3	3	12
Social Research	3	--	4	16
Political Science	94	87	97	100
American Government	82	70	97	100
Local/City/State	40	22	46	64
Jurisprudence	34	9	46	58

Social Science Area	Percent of colleges listing course in class schedules			
	Total	Small (1-1499)	Middle (1500-7499)	Large (7500+)
Political Science, continued				
Tools and Methods	26	13	28	49
Comparative	20	9	21	42
Specialized (Topical)	15	9	13	30
Psychology	99	99	100	100
General	87	78	92	100
Developmental	87	83	91	100
Social-Industrial	39	26	46	52
Abnormal	36	25	42	48
Personality	35	26	32	64
Educational	28	26	29	28
Introductory	18	19	13	28
Contemporary Issues	10	1	12	24
Experimental	8	4	4	32
Physiological	3	0	1	20
Social/Ethnic Studies	21	7	24	42
Ethnic	15	4	15	40
Women	3	1	1	9
Individualized	1	--	--	6

Social Science Area	Percent of colleges listing course in class schedules			
	Total	Small (1-1499)	Medium (1500-7499)	Large (7500+)
Sociology	100	100	100	100
General/Principles	94	94	92	96
Social Problems/General	70	61	72	92
Marriage and Family	69	57	73	92
Social Problems	41	25	49	60
Sociology of Group	11	8	9	24
Social Institutions	1	1	4	12
Special Topics	5	3	14	12

[a]Note. Data on history, political science, and social/ethnic studies are based on the spring 1977 class schedules of the 178 colleges in the NEH sample. Data on the remaining areas are based on spring 1977-winter 1978 class schedules from the 175 colleges in the NSF sample.

Outside of the general introductory survey course, the range of transfer-oriented courses available to students at most community and junior colleges was very limited. To illustrate, less than 40 percent of the colleges offered a political science course in state and local government or in jurisprudence, and less than 30 percent of the colleges offered a course in foundations of political science, comparative government, or in a topical area. Similarly, less than 30 percent of the schools offered a history course in special groups, social history, or in other world regions. Apparantly, the diversity of social science courses offered across a wide range of content areas in the four-year institutions is not available in the curriculum of most two-year colleges.

Availability of Courses for Occupational Students

Over half of the credit enrollments in community and junior colleges are in occupational courses. Yet, as evidenced in the titles of the course content categories listed in Table 2, social science courses designed especially for students in occupational programs are, with few exceptions (e.g., Technology-related Economics), not available in the two-year college curriculum. This finding indicates, quite clearly, that social science departments have done little to attract students in occupational programs to participate in their courses. This was confirmed in a companion study of instructors where 96 percent of the social science faculty noted that their courses were originally designed as being parallel to a lower division course at a four-year institution. However, 30 percent of these same instructors indicated that their courses would also be appropriate for students in occupational programs.

Availability of Courses for Continuing Education Students

At many two-year colleges, the number of students participating in courses for reasons of personal enrichment or occupational development often equals or exceeds the numbers of students pursuing academic degrees and occupational certificates. In general it would seem that continuing education students are much more likely to enroll in social science courses that are non-technical, applied, and perceived as being immediately relevant than courses more technical, theoretical, and somewhat abstract. Thus, one indicator of the extent to which social science departments are attempting to attract non-degree oriented students to enroll in their classes is the availability of non-technical courses that focus on current issues, problems, or special topics in a social science area.

We found that a relatively low percentage of two-year colleges offered a general introductory course in a social science area intended primarily for non-transfer students. To illustrate, while 94 percent of the colleges offered principles of sociology, a course intended primarily for students planning to transfer to a four-year institution, only seven percent offered a more general introductory sociology course designed for non-sociology majors -- those who wish to fulfill a general education requirement, or those not seeking a degree but who wish to learn more about the field. Similar differences in the percentage of colleges that offered introductory courses intended primarily for transfer and non-transfer oriented students were found in economics (93% vs. 33%) and psychology (87% vs. 18%). Only a small percentage of the colleges in the sample offered introductory courses designed primarily for non-degree oriented students in the remaining social science areas studied.

The range of social science courses that focus on current issues, problems, and special topics available to general education and continuing education students is limited at many two-year colleges. This is because the number of courses offered in these areas is small to begin with, and as evidenced in Table 3, of the courses that non-degree students may find especially attractive many specify a prerequisite for entry.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF COURSES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCE DISCIPLINES WITH PREREQUISITES[a]

Social Science Area	Percentage of courses with prerequisites
Anthropology	
Archaeology/Prehistory	39
Specialized Culture	29
Cultural	16
Indian & Native American	12
Physical	11
Introduction/General	5
Economics	
Special Topics	46
Principles	43
Business-Related	41
Technology-Related	25
American	10
Introduction/General	3
Interdisciplinary Social Sciences	
Social Research	40
Envirnomental	33
Aging	28
Special Groups	24
Urban Planning	20
Thanatology	17
Social Science Survey	13
Psychology	
Physiological	100
Experimental	87
Educational	70
Personality/Adjustment	68
Abnormal	62
Social/Industrial	59
Developmental	40
General	22
Contemporary Issues	17
Introduction	5

Social Science Area	Percentage of courses with prerequisites
Sociology	
Social Problems-General	52
Social Problems-Specific	45
Social Institutions-General	45
Marriage and Family	26
Sociology of Groups	21
Social Institutions-Specific	20
General/Principles	9
Introduction	--

[a]Note. Data on course prerequisites were not obtained in the Center's study of the humanities curriculum.

Availability of courses for students in developmental education programs

More and more students attending community colleges have been termed academically underprepared. These students lack the necessary communication skills and learning orientations to participate in a course or program offered by the community junior college. While figures on the number of students who fall into this category are not readily available, it has been estimated that the population of two-year college students selected for remedial efforts usually ranges from 10 to 25 percent of enrollment (Losak, 1973).

Inspection of the catalog descriptions associated with the social science offerings revealed that social science departments have only infrequently addressed courses to the learning needs of this growing segment of the two-year college student population. This finding was confirmed in the faculty survey where less than one percent of the social science instructors described their courses as being appropriate for students in remedial programs. Thus, while it is possible to start some social science courses at a level below college, remedial

classes are still offered primarily in English, math, and reading.

College Size and Course Offerings

One factor that may have contributed to the high percentage of colleges that do not offer a variety of courses in a social science area is institutional size. That is, small colleges, due to limited resources, may not find it feasible to offer more than one or two courses in many of the social science areas. In order to address this concern, the colleges were divided into three size categories on the basis of their enrollments: Small (1-1,499), Medium (1,500-7,499), and Large (7,500 and over).

As shown in Table 2, a strong, positive, and expected relationship existed between institutional size and the percentage of colleges that offer a course within each of the social science areas considered. That is, with few exceptions, large colleges are much more likely to offer a course in any one area within a social science discipline than are the medium-sized colleges, which in their turn are more likely to do so than are the small colleges. This finding indicates that the selection of social science courses available to students attending a large college is likely to be much greater than that available to students attending a medium-sized or small college.

Discussion

Community colleges, by proclaiming that they have something to offer to all according to their needs and abilities, are obliged to provide adequate and meaningful instructional offerings to their constituents. To fulfill the objectives of the open-door policy, community colleges should provide transfer students with social science courses that will prepare them just as their counterparts at the universities are prepared so that potential transfers can

enter more advanced courses in the field withthe same subject matter background. Non-transfer students (i.e., occupational, general education, continuing education) should be afforded the opportunity to take a social science course suitable to their abilities and interests. One reason for designing separate courses for different student groups is that many non-transfer students are neither willing nor capable of successfully completing a traditional transfer social science course and will either avoid it or, if forced by requirements to enroll, will fail or drop out (Apsler, 1967, p. 3).

The major recommendation emanating from this study is for colleges to offer courses in line with the unique learning abilities, goals, and interests of students in each of the many groups they serve. The most obvious solution to this problem would be for two-year colleges to offer general, transfer, occupational, remedial, and personal enrichment courses in a wide range of social science areas. Unfortunately, few of the colleges (especially the middle-sized and small institutions) can afford the luxury of hiring faculty to teach such a wide variety of courses within each of the social science areas. However, social science departments could expand their offerings through the use of self-instructional learning packages. For example, a two-year college could offer a course called "Economics I." Students who enrolled in this class could take such self-instructional courses as "Economics for the Health Professions," "Economics for Auto Mechanics," or "Economics of the City." One or two staff members would supervise the courses, and the students would receive credit in the area of economics they completed (e.g., "Economics I: Economics for the Health Professions"). The use of specially developed learning packages as well as other individualized instruction techniques can also be used to present social science courses to the academically underprepared students.

While figures on the percentage of occupational-program students who enroll in social science courses are not available, the percentage would not likely be high. One approach social science faculty can take to boost their enrollments would be to insist that occupational students be required to take several social science courses. The major shortcomings of this approach are that it will engender resistance from occupational program faculty who will argue that it is all they can do to teach the essential skills of their trade in a two-year course; and many occupational students, once they have gained a marketable skill, will leave the college without graduating, thus circumventing the required social science courses.

A second approach that social science departments could take to increase their enrollments would be to design courses that occupational students would perceive as relevant to them. However, it is not likely that many occupational program students would elect to delay their entry into the job market by enrolling in such courses.

A third approach social science departments could take to increase their enrollments would be to introduce their subjects as part of a unit within an occupational course. Here the social science faculty would identify the political, economic, psychological, sociological, or cultural aspects of an occupation, discuss them with people teaching that trade, and then design a short module that would be used as part of the occupational program. This approach is based on the belief that many occupational program heads would be receptive to having short units of social science courses introduced into their programs but would not welcome an increase in social science requirements for their students. According to this viewpoint, teachers of nursing would not send their students to a his-

tory course but they might appreciate the history instructors' preparing a course module on "The History of Nursing." Similarly, optical science faculty are not likely to impose a political science requirement on their students but might welcome haveing a political science instructor teach a unit of their course on how legislation affects the way lenses must be made.

In sum, community and junior colleges, by virtue of their size and the diversity of the population they serve, play a key role in determining the level of social science literacy in this country. The challenge facing social science faculty is to develop distinctive courses and programs which will make social science studies an attractive elective for all categories of students -- transfer, occupational, and continuing education. Knowledge of the economic and political systems and the individual's relationship with them is becoming increasingly important in enabling one to function effectively in this society. For many, the two-year college is the last opportunity to receive formal instruction in those areas that are so significant to both the individual and to society.

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